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Senate

RETIREMENT PROGRAMS FOR THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

● Mr. DURENBERGER. Mr. President, when we debated the Social Security Amendments of 1983, we were well aware of the concerns expressed by Federal workers. Much of that concern should be allayed by the provision that:

Nothing in this Act shall reduce the accrued entitlement to the future benefits under the federal retirement system of current and retired Federal employees and their families.

Even with this provision, it is essential for each Member of this body to reassure Federal employees of our commitment to insuring their retirement income. The Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Civil Services, Post Office, and General Services, under the able leadership of the assistant majority leader, will soon address the need to restructure Federal retirement systems affected by this act.

Mr. President, when the full Governmental Affairs Committee considers Federal retirement plans, the committee must be especially sensitive to the need to maintain the integrity of retirement systems for our intelligence personnel. Intelligence is truly the first line of defense for our country, and we cannot afford to let it deteriorate.

Our intelligence officers must always be the cream of the crop. They need skills in foreign languages and

cultures; knowledge of political, economic, and military affairs; administrative ability; and often both mental and physical stamina. The Government cannot offer top salaries even to such highly skilled people. We rely largely on their sense of duty.

A major inducement to these people, Mr. President, is the ability to take early retirement in time to have a second career. Retirement at age 55 with 30 years service—or at age 50 with 20 years service, for most overseas employees of the CIA—is a crucial incentive to top-flight personnel who could easily make more money outside the Government.

Early retirement serves other purposes as well. It enables our intelligence agencies to bring in new blood. It lets them give promotions to younger personnel who have the drive and energy that the exhausting world of intelligence demands. Age brings wisdom, but our intelligence agencies also need hustle. They need early retirement systems—including the CIARDS system for CIA's overseas personnel—to keep performing the difficult and crucial tasks that America entrusts to them.

Mr. President, it is too early to say exactly what a restructured Federal retirement system will look like. But I can assure the fine men and women of our intelligence community that my service on the Select Committee on Intelligence has made me well aware of how much we depend upon them. I am determined that they, in turn, will be able to depend upon us. ●